



# The Banner

A monthly newsletter of College Street Congregational Church

## September 2010

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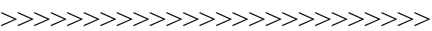
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*“Breathe a prayer of gratitude.  
And give those you love an extra  
measure of affection. Life is  
fleeting, and love is precious.  
Cherish both.”*

**-Galen Guengerich**

## President’s Message...

Having now prepared a sermon and many Banner articles, I can say that I experience much more anxiety in writing Banner articles. I don’t know why that is. I would have guessed, before I’d done both, that the opposite would be true. One difference is that a sermon has timelessness about it, where as an article is supposed to capture a certain moment in the life of our congregation. What if I leave something out? What if I forget to mention someone’s key role? What if I misrepresent something? What if I ask “what if” too many times?

It was a very validating experience to conduct a worship service and to deliver a sermon. I can see why so many of our laypeople are drawn to the ministry after this experience. The real gift for me was the sense of connectedness with the whole congregation. Normally, even as president, I only connect with a handful of people each Sunday. Speaking from the pulpit, however, I can see all of you and I can tell who’s getting my jokes and who’s not. I can see the looks of confusion and of enlightenment. After the service, it was wonderful to hear what personal connections each of you made to my sermon. It was everything good about church multiplied ten times.

There was a surprise, however. In the past, I’ve seen our congregation hold back when given the chance to offer up prayers. So I expected a cool response when I substituted “Joys and Concerns” for “Morning Prayers”. But that was not the case at all. Perhaps because it was a smaller group than normal or because I came down the aisle “Oprah Winfrey” style, but nearly everyone had a joy or a concern to share. And there’s something about a prayer offered in the first person that makes it more powerful than when it’s offered in the third. I hope we remember how we found our voices next time we have a chance.

Another difference between a sermon and an article is that the sermon is a reflection, while the “President’s Message” is most often a call to action. The transition of August to September is much the same. In August, if we’re lucky, we find time to relax, to step away from our daily routines, to focus on the work of being a family. In September, we re-engage, we go back to school or to work, and we assess the things we’ve let sit and get swept up in rush of our daily tasks. For me, as president, that means finding a new trustee to replace Carole Lothrop, continuing our efforts to “Close the Gap”, calling a meeting of our newly formed “Web Committee” (Rachel Morton, Dan Cunningham, and Jess Lilly have agreed to serve), and making sure the recently drafted personnel policy (thanks to Sam Abel-Palmer) gets the review it needs to receive approval by Church Council. At the same time, we continue to celebrate our 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. As we move from reflection to action, I hope we keep a small supply of the calm of August in reserve to draw on as we face the challenges that await.

Craig Abel-Palmer

## The Deacon's Bench

By Elaine Hubert

I'm sure I'm not the only one these days saying it, "Where has the summer gone?" At our last Deacons' meeting in early July, we had many events in the planning stage: the all-church picnic on July 18, the Salvation Army dinner on August 11, and arranging pulpit supply for four Sundays in August, when David would be away for a much-deserved vacation. I used to think of July and August as quiet, lazy months. Not so when you are a Deacon!

What a joy they turned out to be. Our church picnic at North Beach Park was a delight – perfect weather, expert grilling and delicious dishes to share, and terrific games harking back to the 1860s organized by our Christian Education team. Who could resist playing "pin the stole on the minister?" At least 60 people attended this event to celebrate the founding of College Street Church in July 1860.

The Salvation Army had reported high levels of demand for their dinners, so we provided 12 pans of Broccoli Chicken Divan and salad thanks to the culinary efforts of many College Street chefs. As always, the casserole is a big hit – thanks to Anne Kreisel for the recipe – and we served about 110 plates. Very little of those 12 pans of food was left at the end of the dinner.

As co-chair of the Deacons, Aubrey Choquette was in charge of recruiting preachers for August, and what a great job he did, even stepping in to handle one Sunday himself. We had four very different, spiritually enriching services, thanks to Aubrey, Craig Abel-Palmer, Dean Chapman and Peggy Tooker. The pool of talent in our church is quite amazing.

I would be remiss not to mention one other outstanding event from the summer, even though the Deacons were not really called on to do anything – the wedding of Craig and Sam Abel-Palmer on July 25. It was a very special day for the whole congregation, and we are grateful that Sam and Craig shared it with us. Thanks also to Cheryl Cross for organizing the reception.

We now look forward to September and beyond. The Deacons would like to again remind everyone that the Thomas Study (small room to the right off the entry as you enter the church) is available as a retreat for those who need a quiet space during the church service. It is also possible to stay connected with the service by using the hearing device which we've placed in the Thomas Study.

## The Money Watch

By Dennis Lindberg for the Board of Trustees  
Here's where we were on the Church's operating budget at the end of July:

Total 2010 Operating Pledges made for the first 7 months: \$141,411

Total Operating Pledges Received \$137,940

Total Operating Income received from all sources (pledges, collection plates, fund raising and rentals):  
**\$191,737**

Total Operating Income Budget for the first 7 months:  
\$201,904

Total Operating Expenses made for first 7 months:  
**\$202,881**

Total Operating Expense Budget for first 7 months:  
\$197,159

Difference between Operating Income received and Operating Expenses made: **-\$11,144**

Operating pledge income in July was \$2,503 over budget. \$22,704 was received while \$20,538 was shown in the budget. For the first seven months though, operating pledge income received is \$3,471 under budget.

Expenses for the first seven months were over budget by \$5,722 -- down from \$7,507 over budget at the end of May. The electrical repairs in the Sanctuary (made earlier in the year) are being spread over more months and Property Insurance payments (\$5,805 over budget for the first five months) are now spread across seven months and are now only \$2,310 over budget.

When we are short of cash, the treasurer borrows from Permanent Funds and Forward with Faith funds to pay the bills. So far this year, those borrowings have totaled \$21,644.

### Here's where we were on Forward with Faith on August 20:

Total FwF Pledges: \$1,581,572

Total FwF Cash Received so far \$1,286,637

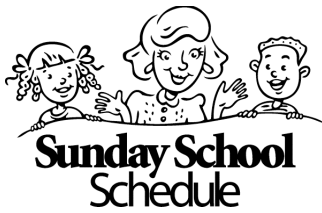
Remaining Cornerstone (UCC) Mortgage for FwF:  
\$723,376

FwF Pledges Outstanding: \$296,261

Since June 20, we have received \$33,931 in FwF cash and have paid down the Cornerstone mortgage by \$44,854. The program of repairs and replacement of stonework on the Church building was completed this summer.

So far this year, we have had FwF income of \$359,091, paid \$35,829 in mortgage interest, reduced the principal of the Cornerstone mortgage by \$295,265, and paid the contractor's bill of \$70,000 for the stonework project.

In general, the Trustees remain comfortable with our financial progress.



## 2010-2011 CHURCH SCHOOL PREVIEW

By Sam Abel-Palmer  
Bd. of Christian Development

Welcome back, everyone! It's September, and the Board of Christian Development is ready (we hope so, at least) for another exciting year. Our theme this year for Church School is "People of the Bible," with units on "Joseph the Dreamer," "David the Shepherd King," "Jesus the Healer," and "Women of the Resurrection." In between will be lots of other special projects and events, and we hope you can join us for all of them.

Be sure to mark your calendars early for these important dates: Rally Day on September 12, the 150th Celebration service on November 7, Advent Service and Carol Sing on December 5, Hanging of the Greens and Mitten Tree Service on December 12, Christmas Eve Pageant on December 24, Youth Sunday on February 13, and Church School Sunday on June 5.

We are still welcoming volunteers as teachers, shepherds and assistants with special projects. Please see one of our directors, Jennifer Faul and Laura Labrie, to let them know how you can help out.

Here is a quick overview of the year's program. We look forward to everyone's participation.

*September 5* – Church School Orientation/Teacher Meeting

*September 12* = Rally Day

**September 19 - October 24** - Workshop I, "Joseph the Dreamer"

*October 31* - Halloween/Mission Project

*November 7* = 150th Celebration Service

**November 14 - January 23** - Workshop II, "David the Shepherd King"—*With breaks for . . .*

*December 5 - 26* - Advent and Christmas Services

*December 26* = Bell Sunday

*January 2* - Mission Project

**January 30 - March 20** - Workshop III, "Jesus the Healer"—*With breaks for . . .*

February 6—Youth Sunday Preparation

February 13—Youth Sunday

March 6—Mission Project

April 3—Mission Project

**April 10-May 22**—Workshop Block IV, "Women of the Resurrection"—*With breaks for . . .*

*April 24*—Easter Sunday

*May 8*—Mother's Day and Choir Sunday

*May 29*—Church School Sunday Preparation

*June 5*—Church School Sunday and Confirmation

*June 12*—Pentecost, Mission Project and Last Day of Church School

We have also started to put together our adult education program for this year. The first program will be on a DVD series called "**Countering Pharaoh's Production: Consumption Society Today.**" It features UCC Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann and focuses on a study of the Exodus. Brueggemann comments, "*It's a journey from slavery to covenant that we keep making over and over again... (because) Pharaoh has immense power to always draw us back into slavery.*" Sessions to be held jointly with Christ Church Presbyterian at their church; beginning September 19 from 4-6 p.m. and running for 5 weeks.



WE ARE HAPPY TO WELCOME the Youth Singers, both old and new young music lovers who would like to "give it a try." The first rehearsal is Sunday, September 19 at 11:30 (after the church service) in the "music classroom." The only requirements for participation are the ability to read the words of hymns and enthusiasm for singing.

Morris Pike and Leslie Desrosiers will be continuing to conduct and guide our youngest members. We'll be singing with the Senior Choir on Rally Day, September 12 (a repeat from last year) and our first "official" appearance will be on November 7 with the Senior Choir for the festive "birthday celebration." Tentative appearance schedule: December 5, February 13 (Youth Sunday), April 17 (Palm Sunday), May 8 (Choir Sunday) and June 5 (Church School Sunday). We rehearse for about 30 minutes, but we accomplish a lot!! Come join us! The more the merrier!



**The Senior Choir** resumes rehearsals the Thursday after Labor Day, September 9, and will sing for worship on Rally Day, September 12. We rehearse in the Perkins Room every Thursday from 7:30 to 9:00. Men have a section rehearsal from 7:00 to 7:30. Our repertoire is varied

and challenging. We are taking a leap of faith with several "divisi" pieces added to our repertoire. New members are welcomed with open arms! There is no such thing as too many people in the choir!!!

Yona Yellin - Director of Music

## **Fall Concert/Fundraising Series**

**By Bill Harwood**

Last July our church hosted a series of six noontime chamber concerts, with Mike Dabroski, violin, and Samantha Angstman, piano. They were the first in a new chamber music series organized by the Burlington Ensemble, which partners with local non-profits to raise money for them and to building chamber music audiences.

When Mike asked me whether College Street could be the home for their 2010-2011 season, I took it to my fellow Trustees, and we said YES! Mike's goals mesh with our Mission objectives: Raise money for charities and provide top-quality entertainment in our Sanctuary, now known for its excellent acoustics.

The first concert will be on Saturday evening, **September 18**, with Mike leading an evening of string quartet music. Admission by donation on behalf of the Stern Center for Language and Learning.

Later on another fund-raiser: a 45-voice men's **Welsh Choir** from Burlington, Ontario on Wednesday, **September 29**. They will perform at 7:30, again in our sanctuary. **Maple Jam**, a local jazz-oriented a cappella vocal octet, will also be on the program. *So, Men of Harlech, All through the Night, and Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah*---come and hear them performed the Welsh way. Admission by donation.

Church members Gail Stevenson and Linda Wheeler have given excellent logistical support and we thank them.



## **Craig & Sam's Wedding**

**By Pat Morgan**

Our church has been rejoicing in celebrating its 150th anniversary throughout the year, and yet another cause for happiness was the wedding on Sunday, July 25, of our church president, Craig Abel-Palmer to Samuel Abel-Palmer, a member of the Board of Christian Development. (David Wright quipped that it was probably the first wedding in our church where everyone sat on the grooms' side!) The two men had been together for 18 years, and 16 years ago had exchanged rings in a commitment ceremony at the First Congregational Church in Thetford, Vermont.

The morning worship service was entirely planned around the wedding ceremony. The musical prelude

included "Simple Gifts"; the hymns and special music were all appropriate to the occasion; the scripture readings were from Micah, "What does the Lord require of you, but to love mercy, show kindness, and walk humbly with your God," and Matthew's account of Jesus' story of the wedding of the King's son in which a guest who came without his wedding garment was violently expelled from the party. In his sermon, David asked if we had come without our wedding garment. Were we dressed in our old ways and attitudes? Were we opting out of the party or were we as guests going to participate in the occasion of the marriage of Sam and Craig because we want love to last?

The congregation made it clear throughout the ceremony that followed that this marriage was wholeheartedly supported. Little girls with summer flowers led the grooms down the aisle. Sam and Craig's three sons, Joseph, Jacob and Charlie, dressed like their fathers in black, each wearing a vest of a rainbow color, proudly stood by David, while the sisters of the grooms led Sam and Craig down the aisle to the joyful wedding march. David reminded the boys that they were already part of a loving family and asked if they would continue to love one another as a family. He asked the same commitment of the body of guests and then had the grooms speak their vows to one another and exchange rings. The rings given to each other 16 years ago were to seal their commitment to one another. The new rings symbolized their marriage.

David reminded those present that wine represents the joy of life and invited the grooms to sip from the cup he offered to them and to share together all the blessings that life has to offer. He followed with a blessing in Hebrew, and Sam and Craig stomped a glass together. When they were pronounced lawfully married in the eyes of the church and the law of the state and the benediction pronounced, there was a standing ovation. There was a VERY long and enthusiastic burst of applause that seemed to reinforce the words, "What God has joined together we must not divide." Many of those worshipping that day confessed to moist eyes and a feeling of great joy at the close of the service.

## **Become a Sponsor of THE NEW HISTORY**

**By Pat Morgan**

Our new book, which is due out before Christmas will include past history of the church and its major events, but a part of it will focus on the history we are making now.

If you want to be a sponsor of our new history book, here is a way to do so. For \$75 for each person you want to honor or remember, your name and theirs will be

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listed in the front of the book. It is a good way to acknowledge all those people who have been a part of College Street Church over the years or have perhaps affected your own life in another church. It may be a former teacher or minister or parent who helped to make you the person you are today. Our hymnals were purchased this way, as was the most recent cookbook.

A substantial gift has already been pledged so that there will be money for the first payment on the book, which should be ready before Christmas. If you know of former members or church friends who may not get *The Banner*, please tell them about this opportunity. Even if you do not want to honor a name but would like to contribute, all contributions will be welcomed and listed.

You may also wish to pre-order your own copy of this limited edition. The cost is \$30. Make your check payable to College Street Church and label it "History Book". This will guarantee your copy and help underwrite the cost of printing. Order today!

**College Street Congregational Church, UCC  
265 College Street  
Burlington, VT 05401**



*September*

**2010**